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ABSTRACT

To make learning about various forms of poetry more interesting to high school students, this paper presents ideas based on an example and precept method of teaching instead of an analysis and explication method. In an introductory section, the paper explains how students will produce a poetry portfolio consisting of 10 or 12 types of poems such as haiku, limericks, concrete poetry, and cinquain. Next, the paper discusses the advantages of having students write and illustrate their poetry using microcomputers and word processing software. Appendixes provide sample assignments for 12 kinds of poetry, with a full explanation of each type, and examples of students' poetry. (SRT)

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COMPUTERS AND THE POETRY PORTFOLIO

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

High school students interested in life, people, and themselves can be easily induced to like poetry--at least some kinds of poetry. But to expect teenagers to like poetry taught through emphasizing metrical patterns, abstract terminology, figurative language, and end-stopped lines is to expect irrationality to prevail over fact--wired or bloated cows give less milk, not more, and afflicted animals often die rather than develop into consistent producers. In regards to approaches to poetry, Housman warned, "The cow, the old cow, she is dead," rimed to death before her time.

But poetry does not necessarily have to kill cows or muzzle kids. On the contrary, teaching poetry to teenagers through the Poetry Portfolio Method can be a pleasureable activity for teachers and students. Teaching poetry through the Poetry Portfolio Method brings life and activity to students, not death or entropy. Teaching the Poetry Portfolio is a way to fill student minds with insights and feelings, their lives with excitement and joy. Teaching poetry through the Portfolio Method is a way to stimulate student minds with imagination and shared experiences. It is a way to avoid both head-aches and belly-aches.

In working with secondary teachers and students for more than twenty years, I have found no activity or assignment more successful than the Poetry Portfolio. Although there are many variations within this method, several assignments and activites within the portfolio are the same. Teachers, for example, direct students to write ten or twelve types of poems, often including a Name Poem, a Haiku, a Limerick, a Concrete Poem, a Cinquain, a Diamante, a List Poem, a Blotz Poem, a Five Sense Poem, a Form Poem, and a Dylan Thomas Portrait Poem. (See Appendix 1 for assignments, directions, and examples of poems.) Students working on the Poetry Portfolio write one or two poems for each type defined and illustrated in the handout. Successful writing of the poems by the students is based almost exclusively on the "example and precept" method of teaching, not the "analysis and explication" approach. Thus, the portfolio approach to reading, writing, and appreciating poetry is rooted in looking at and pondering over the forms, ideas, and feelings in each of the poems assigned and illustrated, and then trying to imitate them--learning about poetry by writing poems. In addition, students often illustrate their poems by drawing pictures about their content or by cutting out pictures and illustrating their ideas through magazines, travel brochures, and picture books. Further, some teachers assign students to include in their portfolio three or four poems they particularly like or appreciate, poems selected from published poets. (See Appendix 2 for an example of an illustrated Poetry Portfolio.)

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But the most important changes that have come in teaching poetry through the Poetry Portfolio Method during the past five years are changes directly spawned by students writing on microcomputers in our homes and schools.

Relatively new and exciting, microcomputers are important tools to make the completing of activities associated with the Poetry Portfolio more enjoyable, more exciting, and more creative. Take, for example, the composing of the Concrete Poem which involves actually using letters, words, shapes, and forms to illustrate the idea or concept being developed in the poem. A Concrete Poem uses words and symbols to create a shape or form as in:

```
THEMTHEMTHEMTHEM
HEMTHEMTHEMTHEMT
EMTHEMTHEMTHEMTH
MTHEMTHEMTHEMTHE          ME
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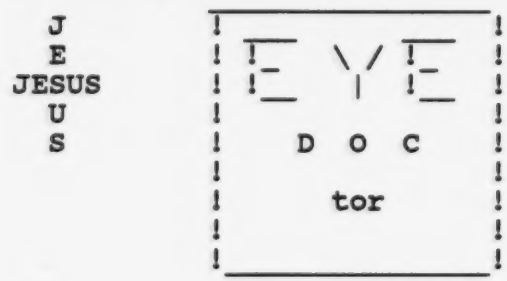
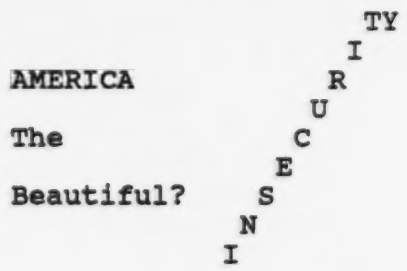
Although they did not invent it, computer graphics have revolutionized the Concrete Poem. Caught up in computer grahics, students spend hours writing Concrete Poems to illustrate and define specific insights and feelings. Who has not seen the graphic of a heart standing for love or the circle with a burning cigarette in it, with an X or slash drawn through the cigarette, indicating no smoking? Such graphic images and icons are the substance of concrete poems, and students are especially adept at creating Concrete Poems on the computer. Here are a few examples of very simple, unembellished Concrete Poems:





Of course, the simple graphics created above could be created by students writing on a typewriter. Graphics capabilities on the IBM PC and especially the Macintosh computer, however, are producing a wide variety of concrete poems that can not be written on the typewriter and that have not been encountered before in English classrooms. (See Appendix 3 for more elaborate examples of some computer-generated Concrete Poems.)

One variety of a Concrete Poem popular among students these days, a kind not requiring extensive graphics capabilities on the computer, is the Auto License Plate Poem in which students express themselves, as their parents do, through catchy license plate slogans. A tennis enthusiast asks, RU410S2, "Are you for

tennis, too?" A 1985 English Journal article is an excellent source of numerous categories, kinds, and examples of auto license plate Concrete Poems.

Being able to generate pictures, images, and icons on the computer for Concrete Poems has led some students to realize that if they can make their own concrete poems on the computer, then they also have the capabilities of illustrating, by computer, all the poems they write for the Poetry Portfolio. Thus, the cutting out of pictures to illustrate Poetry Portfolio poems is being replaced by computer-generated pictures and illustrations. (See Appendix 4 for examples of several types of poems illustrated by computer graphics.)

A few words of caution. One of the practical concerns about using computers in schools in such creative ways is that the classroom should not become a graphics art class; nor should the teacher become a graphics art teacher; nor should valuable curriculum time be dedicated to hours of computer picture making. Using classroom time to produce computer-generated Concrete Poems or to illustrate other poems in the Poetry Portfolio is not justified. No one, however, should object to students working at home or during their free time at school in the Writing Center, completing the Poetry Portfolio assignments by computer rather than by hand.

Computer graphics being put aside for the moment, is computerized word processing having any impact on how students complete the assignments in the Poetry Portfolio? Of course it is. Electronic word processing is making several subtle differences in the time students spend writing their poems, in the number and kinds of revisions students make, and in the forms final copies of the poems take.

Consider, how much time it takes to write poems by computer or by typewriter or hand. Consider, for example, the task of centering the title of a poem if the student is typing the poem on a typewriter or is using a word processor to write the poem. In typing a title, a student determines the center of the paper, counts the number of spaces in the title, divides by two, and types the title beginning the correct number of spaces from left center. In computerized word processing, the student simply invokes the "Center" function and begins typing, not counting spaces and not worrying about retyping because a text or title was not centered properly. Depending on the length of the title of the poem, students use 1/2 to 1/4 the regular time required to center a title for a poem. Students save much time and avoid much frustration through word procesing their texts.

Consider the centering function again, one of many functions in word processing programs, this time in connection with actually writing one of the poems assigned in the Poetry Portfolio, the Diamante. (See Appendix 1, Poem 8.) As the name implies, the shape of the poem when fully composed is a diamond, not the point of a spear as it appears in the assignment sheet because each line is not centered. A student writing a Diamante Poem, a student who has a word processor, is fortunate indeed. By using the centering function the student responds to the requirements to each line(line 1, a noun; line 2, two

adjectives, etc.) and the final product appears rapidly, centered as follows:

Cocoon
Scrawny, ugly
Stirring, Growing, Fearing
Stickiness, capsule, fur, home
Opening, Spreading, Fluttering
Golden, Graceful
Butterfly

The metamorphosis of going from cocoon to butterfly is complete, the shaping of the student's ideas and images in the form of a diamond is automatic, and the student's time spent actually writing this poem is half.

A second major implication of word processing poems is the easy and fast opportunities for revision that computers provide. Revising poems can be accomplished faster and more completely on a word processor than through any other means available to students. In the poem, "Cocoon," for example, if the student wanted to capitalize all words in the poem, the process would be easy. The student would simply change four lower case letters to capitals and then print the final product. A student typing or writing poems by hand who wanted to make the same changes in the text would be forced to copy the whole poem over again. Further, changing words or whole lines is a simple process on a word processor--not so easy if typing or writing by hand. Thus, computers are the fastest tools of revision available in our society, and careful revision is one of the most effective keys to improved expression of student experiences, feelings, insights, and meanings. (Computers also afford students opportunities to do group writing and group revision, on-going writing and on-going revising, while composing is taking place, a topic for another discussion.)

Computer-produced poems are now taking on interesting and unusual final forms because of electronic print technology. In addition to illustrating poems through graphics, students writing poems for the Poetry Portfolio by computer use a wide variety of print styles and character sizes in their poems. Some poems have the first line written in one style of print, then the second and third lines in other styles of print, suggesting differences in meaning and expression through what and how something is said. (See Appendix 5.) Students also will use the bold and <u>underlining</u> features of word processing to stress ideas and feelings.

Finally, the coming together of the Poetry Portfolio and the computer is a fortunate, felicitous marriage. Computers make the writing of the Poetry Portfolio poems highly enjoyable, highly exciting, and highly creative. Also important, once saved on a disk, the poems in the Poetry Portfolio can be easily located and easily reproduced for display and distribution. The children spawned from the marriage of computers and The Poetry Portfolio, like the marriage itself, will endure the test of time.

The Poetry Portfolio (Assignments)

Assignments: Write two of each of the following types of poems

1. A NAME POEM, your own name plus another name such as Abraham Lincoln
2. A FIVE-SENSE POEM
3. A CONCRETE POEM
4. A WHO-WHAT-WHEN-WHERE-WHY POEM
5. A FORM POEM
6. A LIST POEM
7. A CINQUAIN
8. A DIAMANTE
9. A LIMERICK
10. A HAIKU
11. A BLOTZ POEM
12. A DYLAN THOMAS PORTRAIT

1. A NAME POEM takes the outermost, first and all other letters in a name, and spells the name as an acrostic, making descriptive, objective statements about the person.

S hort
H omework lover
A nxious to get out of school
W ild imagination

H appy with friends or alone
A t home when he is at work
L ikes to read
E veryone's pal.

A bolished slavery
B orn in a log cabin
R ead by fire light
A ffectionately Abe
H omely
A ssassinated
M elancholically moody

L og splitter
I ntelligent
N ight worker
C ommon
O rator
L iterate
N ot a quitter

2. A FIVE-SENSE POEM uses the five senses as follows:
Line 1 Tells what color an idea or emotion is.
Line 2 Tells what the emotion tastes like.
Line 3 Tells what the idea or emotion sounds like.
Line 4 Tells what the idea looks like.
Line 5 Tells what the idea or emotion makes a person feel like.

Fall is red and yellow.
It tastes like chicken soup.
It sounds like wind through the trees.
And smells like warm wood smoke.
It looks like what you see when you get your new glasses.
It makes you feel energetic.

3. A CONCRETE POEM actually uses words to create a shape or form.

THEMTHEMTHEMTHEM
HEMTHEMTHEMTHEMT
EMTHEMTHEMTHEMTH
MTHEMTHEMTHEMTHE ME

An arrow can make a hole in your heart.

Mountain is like a Palace on the horizon filled with secrets of time.

4. A WHO-WHAT-WHEN-WHERE-WHY POEM answers on question in each line in any sequence. A line may be a single word, phrase, or sentence.

I
Got rid of the note
On the bus
On the way home
So my mom wouldn't see it.

A small puppy
Toddles along
A dirt road
Late at night.
Nobody wanted him.

5. A FORM POEM is a group of words, any part of speech, connected by association and separated by commas.

INDUSTRY

_____, _____, _____, _____ (A)
_____, _____, _____ (B)
_____, _____, _____, _____ (A)
_____, _____, _____ (B)

Smoke, soot, smell, choke
Flash, orange, black,
Steel iron, coal, coke,
Truck, rails, track.

6. A LIST POEM focuses on a list of twenty-five words relating to a subject. The words are arranged in reference to alliteration, parallel structure, and forms.

Viloin, viola, timpani, bass
Clarinet, cello, bells and brass,
Trumpets and trombones and saxophones,
Jazz, Bop, Rock, Pop,
Harmonicas, pianos, flutes and harps
Three-four, four-four, flats and sharps,
Music, Music.

7. A CINQUAIN is a five line poem which does the following:

Line 1 selects a noun as the subject of the poem.
Line 2 gives two adjectives to describe the noun.
Line 3 gives three action verbs about the noun.
Line 4 gives four words of personal feeling.
Line 5 gives a noun that restates the first noun.

Autumn
Brilliant, picturesque
Beautifies, brightens, ench
Patchwork of colorful blank
Spectacle.

Doors,
Smooth, hard
Close, stick open
A nuisance
Doors

Pup
Fluffy, Wriggly
Barks, Licks, Cuddles
Who cares if he puddles?
Pal

8. A DIAMANTE expresses ideas as follows in seven lines:

Line 1 =	a noun	Cocoon
Line 2 =	two adjectives	Scrawny, ugly
Line 3 =	three ED or ING words	Stirring, Growing, Fearing
Line 4 =	four related nouns	Stickiness, capsule, fur, home
Line 5 =	three ING or ED words showing a change	Opening, Spreading, Fluttering Golden, Graceful
Line 6 =	two adjs. furthering change	Butterfly
Line 7 =	a noun opposite the noun in line 1	

9. A LIMERICK is a poem of five lines, riming aa, bb, a.

There was a young lady of Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger,
When they returned from the ride,
The lady was inside,
And the smile was on the face of the tiger.

10. A HAIKU is a three line poem of five, seven and five syllables in each line. Japanese in its origin, this poem usually involves nature.

The lightning flashes!
And slashing through the darkness
The night-heron's screech.

11. A BLOTZ POEM often calls for students to use a thesaurus or dictionary:

Line 1 names your creature. This is a _____
Line 2 tells where the creature lives. (All words begin with the first letter of the creature's name. Include at least four words.)
Line 3 tells what your creature eats. (Use the same first letter.)
Line 4 tells what your creature likes.(Same first letter. Still four things.)
Line 5 tells something about your creature. (Same first letter. Three things.)
Line 6 tells something your creature did to you.

This is a teacherian.
Teacherians live in Turkish towers on top of telegraph transmitters in Tibet.
Teacherians eat tortoise toes, tangy tarts, tender toast, and tuna,
Teacherians throw temper tantrums, torment students, try on toupees, and twiddle their thumbs.
Teacherians teach trigonomotry, enjoy tapestry, and like tanning their temples.
This teacherian told me to tape up my mouth.
It tortured me and tore out my teeth.

12. A DYLAN THOMAS PORTRAIT answers a question, using description, in two lines.

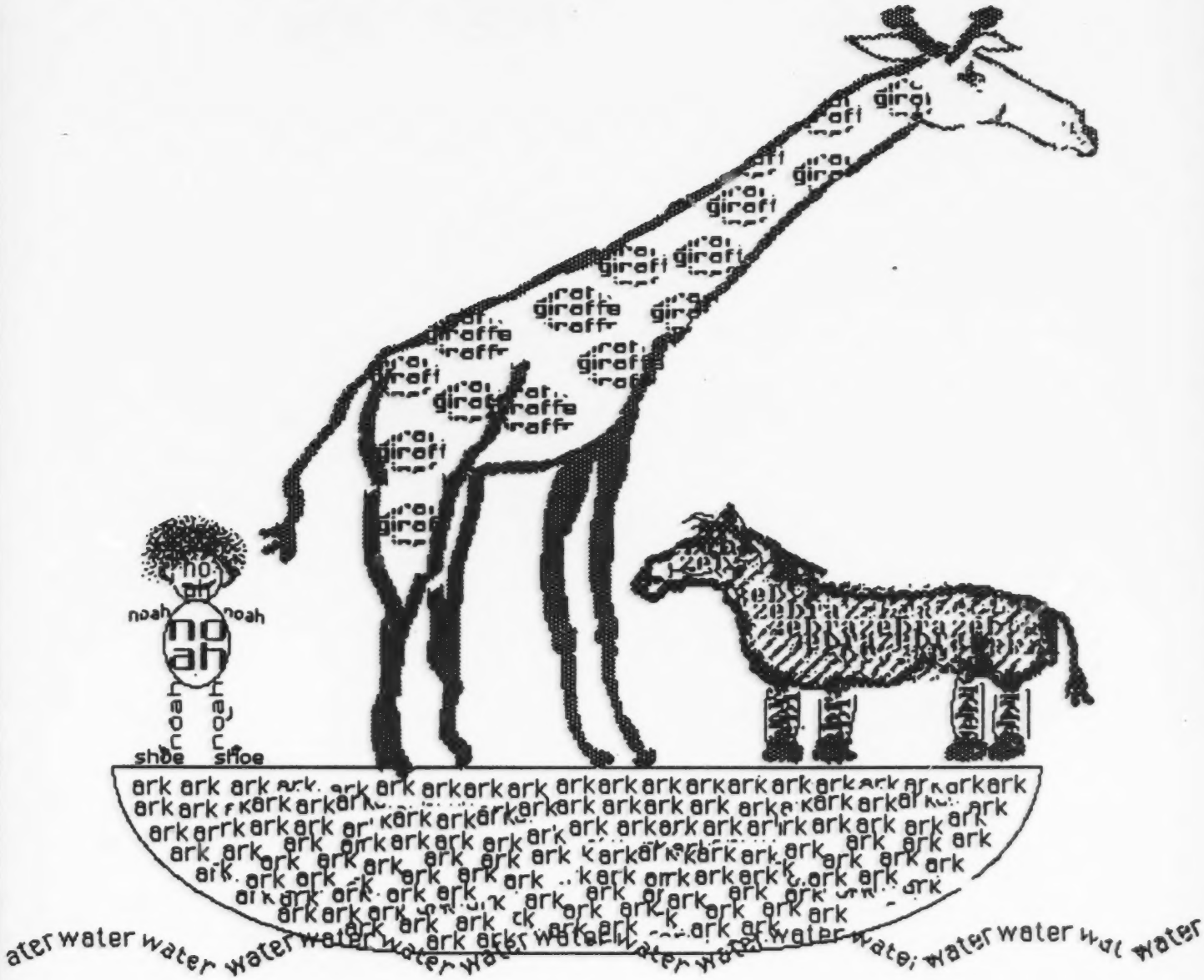
Did you ever see a school boy?
Shirt out-hanging, messy-haired,
Homeworkless.

Did you ever see a cat?
Highly-polished, radar-eyed, bewitched.

There once was a princess named Jackie
who rode a pretty pony called Blackie.
One day on a ride
Fancy tricks they did try—
Now they ride in a circus—How Wacky!

Purple, green, black, blue,
Leather, chains,
Mohawk, talk, bangs, fangs,
Streets, corners, bars, cars,
Hang-out, break out, make out, make-up,
Earrings, noserings, cheek rings, teeth rings,
Smoke, dope,
Punkers.

APPENDIX 3A



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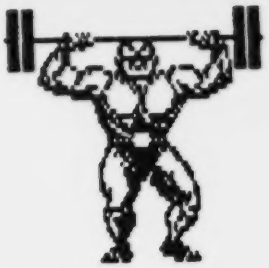
Funny
Reckon family funds
Abhor cold weather
New clothes lover
Cake baker
Idealist
Near graduation
Eater of sweets

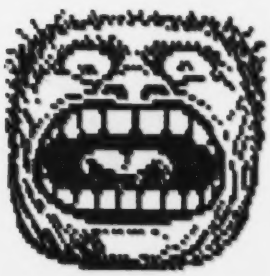


Middle child
Corroborater
Daring
Admire muscles
Dodge ball champ
Excel in some sports

Chartered ships
Hero
Raised funds
Italian
Student
Told to give up
Overcame
Prayed
Historic figure
Evoked criticism
Revolutionary

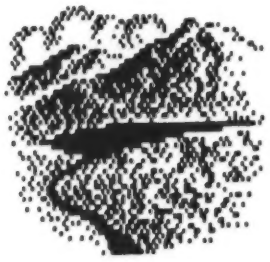
Creative thinker
Open minded
Leader
University of Salamanca
Made it to America
Brave
Used common sense
Santa Maria

Love is pink.
It sounds like fireworks.
It smells like roses.
It looks like frilly wrapping paper.
It makes you feel wanted.



Anger is black and red.
It tastes like salt.
It sounds like rocks going down a slide.
It smells like burning rubber.
It looks like a violent thunder storm.
It makes you feel hot.

The mountain stands tall.
It changes from year to year.
The seasons paint it.

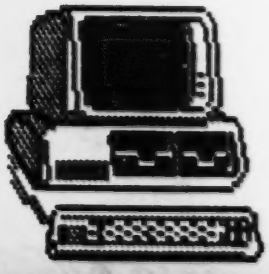


The waterfall flows
And splashes into the lake.
The water sparkles.

This is a secretart.
Secretarts live in scanty skylabs sitting on stars.
Secretarts eat students, slime, and all sorts of solutions.
Secretarts love to sting sophomores, to be sordid, they love specifics and sad stories.
Secretarts sing stilted songs, seem sorry, scratch their scabs and slip away for breaks.
This secretart stapled me, stamped me and sent me away.

This is a cidish.
Cidishes live in carpeted crystals currently around the corner.
Cidishes eat corn, calves, cats and anything catered.
Cidishes like carts, cops, cash and caricatures.
Cidishes contract cavities from consuming so much candy.
This Cidish visited me in California carrying collages. It came in a car and kept me company.

Did you ever see a millionare?
Wearing a tight black tux, rotund, bald.



Did you ever meet a computer?
Dumb, cold, with plenty of potential.

Southern Sugar vs Yankee Sugar

There are two kinds of sugar produced in the United States: Southern Sugar and Yankee Sugar. All the people I know prefer the Southern variety because of its consistency, appearance, and taste.

Southern Sugar has a consistency like no other sugar in the world. Once you have tried Southern Sugar, you never want any other kind. And is there any way to underline this or put it in **bold** letters? I'm not too dumb. **Ok, what can I do now?** *This is pretty fun, gang.* I really thinks I'm going to be having **too much fun** when **Kerry** gits her little computer. Whatcha be sayin, Boy? Oooooh, don't be doin that to little ole me!

Can you tell I've been gaining weight? Let's lose a little.

No, I'd rather be fat. I wanna be a Zoobie, and you can be my Coed!!! **Look what I did, Kerry!** ***Aren't you proud of moi?*** Little ole Bryan just is the sweetest little thang! He likes to be helpin us little coeds. Now we're doin the Geneva thang. **Have we done this yet?** **I'm out of things to do!**

Try this SCHNOORIPUTZY! thanks Bryl I forgot which one is which. ***This is just lots of fun for girls and boys.***

Bye y'all!

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